

SHAKESPEARE THE “UPSTART CROW”

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Abstract

In My paper I would like to show particularly. Robert Greene’s shake scene is addressed to William Shakespeare. Though many people were against him. But I particularly will go with the Robert Green. I have seen several features in my paper also. Green is saying that “upstart Crow” was an actor who now believes that he can write as well as the best scholars. The pamphlet was called the *Groatsworth of Wit*’ in which Robert Greene attacks the actor William Shakespeare as an ‘upstart crow’.

William Shakespeare was born on 26 April 1564 and died on 23 April 1616. He was an English poet playwright and actor. He was widely regarded as the greatest writer in the English language and the world's pre-eminent dramatist. He is often called England's national poet the "Bard of Avon". His extant works, including some collaboration, consist of thirty eight plays and one hundred and fifty four sonnets, two long narrative poems, and a few other verses, the authorship of some of which is uncertain. His plays have been translated into every major living language and are performed more often than those of any other playwright. Shakespeare was not revered in his lifetime, but he received a large amount of praise. Moreover, He has been criticized mostly as a playwright. Various critics criticised him. In 1598 Francis Meris singled him out from a group of English writers as "the most excellent" in both comedy and tragedy. The authors of the *Parnassus* plays numbered him with Chucer, Gower and Spencer . In the First folio, Ben Jonson called Shakespeare the "Soul of the age, the applause, delight, the wonder of our stage", though he had remarked elsewhere that "Shakespeare wanted art".

The paraphernalia of critics fail to unearth the important activities of William Shakespeare during two major spans of time commonly referred to as ‘lost years’: the first period(1578-82) covers the time after Shakespeare left Grammar School until his marriage with Anne Hathway in November of 1582. The second period covers the seven years of Shakespeare’s life (1585-92) in which he must have been developing his dramatic skills. No one knows for certain how Shakespeare started his career in theatre, probably recruited by Lecister’s or Queen’s Men. But by the end of 1592, he was an established actor. Hence first historical reference of his name ,though controversial, appear in Robert Greene’s declaration in his death bed pamphlet “A Groats- Worth of Wit”: Robert Greene (baptised 11 July 1558, died 3 September 1592) was an English author popular in his day, and now best known for a posthumous pamphlet attributed to him, *Greenes, Groats-worth of Witte, bought with a million of*

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Repentance, widely believed to contain an attack on William Shakespeare. He is said to have been born in Norwich. He attended Cambridge, receiving a BA in 1580, and an M.A. in 1583 before moving to London, where he arguably became the first professional author in England. Greene published in many genres including romances, plays and autobiography. Yes trust them not, for there is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his tygers heart wrapt in a players hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you; and being an absolute Johanese Factotum, is in his owne conceit the only Shake-scene in a countrie.

An ‘upstart crow’ is a characteristic of someone who has risen economically or socially but lacks the social skills appropriate for this new position. On the other hand, to ‘crow’ is to boast and a crow is a scavenger who steals from others. Green hinges upon the fact that Shakespeare now believes that he can write ‘beautified with our feathers’, referring to his intimate association with ‘University Wits’. The epithet heralded upon Shakespeare is ‘Johanese Factotum’ meaning a Jack of all trades. Greene does not like the then actors (‘trust them not’) since the theatres and acting companies were being controlled by the paid-off players, whereas the author receives no money. There were neither copyright laws nor any royalties.

By the time Shakespeare arrived in London in around 1587, Greene was already an established writer with his eminent association with the ‘went-to-Cambridge’ wits including Marlowe and Kyd and Nashe. Greene was a very colourful figure wearing very fashionable clothing and styling his red beard into a point to pose his difference or his upbringing into a great social status. Shakespeare, on the other hand, managed only grammar school education due to his father’s financial loss. By 1592 Shakespeare gets his first acclaim as a writer with Henry VI trilogy. But Greene’s greatest works *Pandosto*(1588) and *Menaphon*(1589) were behind him. It might be that Greene must have been terrified by someone as ambitious and talented as Shakespeare.

Within three years—1592-1594—Greene, Marlowe and Kyd were dead. Greene dranked himself to death. There was no one else who could be another Shakespeare. He was well aware of Witian talent and their drawbacks. That’s why instead of following their footsteps he developed his own panopticality and forte. When Greene was drinking, buying clothes and hanging out with London’s low-lives, Shakespeare was hard at work. The worth proof is that after Greene’s death, his editor, Henry Chettle, Publicly apologized to Shakespeare in the preface to his *Kind-Heart’s Dream*:

The other, whom at that time I did not so much spare as since I wish I had, for that, as I have if the original fault had been my fault, because myself has seen his demeanor no less civil than he excellent in the quality he professes. Besides the diver of worship has reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty and facetious grace in writing that approves his art. Such an apology indicates that Shakespeare was already an established player in London. Records also tell that several of his plays were popular by this time, including Henry VI, *The Comedy of Errors* and *Titus Andronicus*. The Company that staged most of the early productions of these plays was *Pembroke’s Men*, which used to perform at the court of Queen Elizabeth during 1590s. Critics like Daryl Pinksen claims that the ‘upstart crow’ may have been the star player Edward Alleyn of *Lord Strange’s Men*, with whom Greene had acquaintance and whose group pockets a huge profit by staging Greene’s plays. But taking cue from Henry Chettle’s apology the question appears, who is the ‘facetious grace’ writer then since Alleyn was not a playwright? Even Alleyn himself was a star performer in Henry VI trilogy. More than so,

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realizing the importance of the person, Thomas Nashe, whom Greene addressed along with the other Wits in *Groatsworth of Wit*, forcibly acquits himself from the charge of involving with Greene in blaming someone like 'Upstat Crow'. Doubt remains whether it could have been in case of Alleyn. Nashe used a statement in the preface to his 1592 *Piere Pennileese*: Other news I am advertised of, that a scald trivial lying pamphlet called Greene's *Groats worth of Wit* is given out to be of my doing. God never have care of my soul, but utterly renounce me, if the last word or syllable in it proceeded from my pen, or if I were any way privy to the writing or printing of it.

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